

7/12
(16)**Don Johnson**

From: Dore' Hunter
Sent: Sunday, June 06, 2004 4:26 PM
To: Board of Selectmen; Historic District Commission; Historical Commission; Dean Charter; Don Johnson; Don MacKenzie
Subject: Proposal for a Historical Memorial to Selectman Francis Faulkner

Hi Folks,

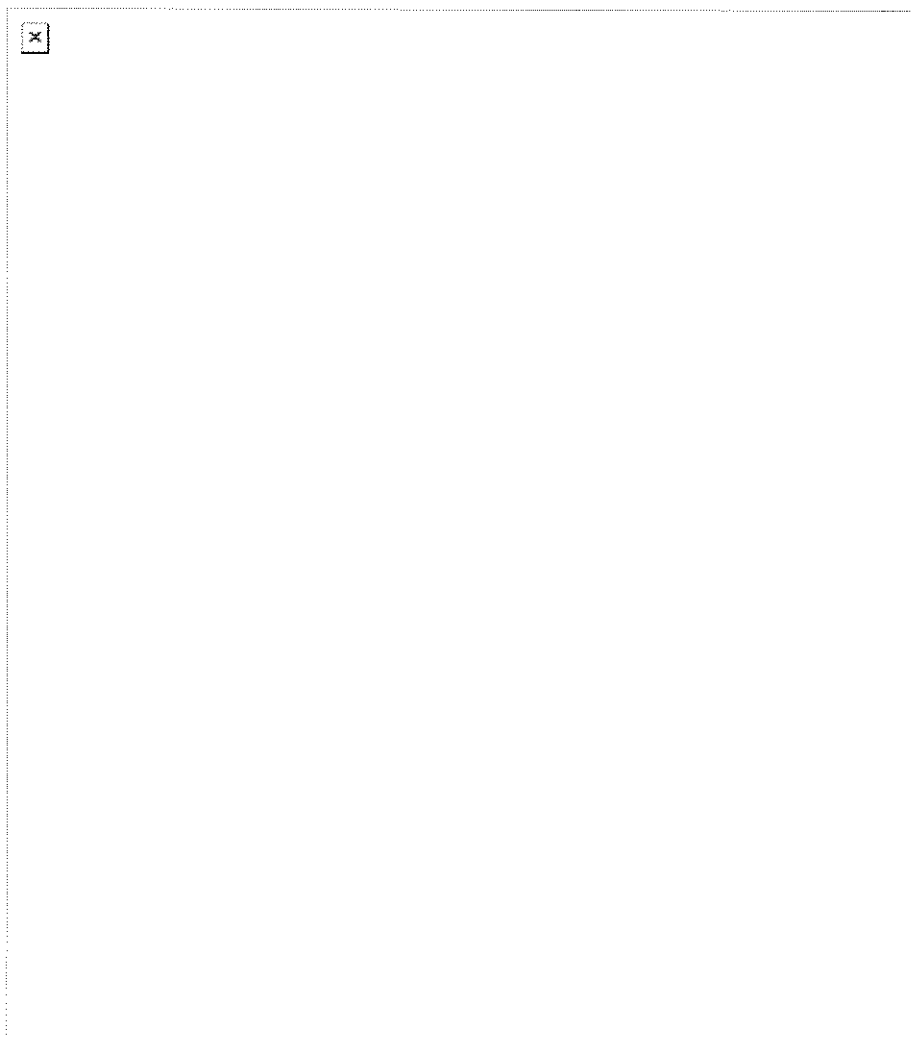
In my capacity as a private citizen I am in the process of working up an application for submission to the Community Preservation Committee for a practical replacement of a lost historical marker. The application will seek funding to have a replacement plaque or tablet created honoring and memorializing the outstanding early Acton service of the longest tenured Selectmen, Colonel Francis Faulkner. I would appreciate your informal and unofficial comments on this idea generally, and specifically any thoughts that you might have in regard to what should appear on such a memorial. Set forth at the bottom of this email is my first draft of the memorial plaque or tablet that I intend to recommend.

I envision an etched or cast metal plaque which would be mounted somewhere in Town Hall with due ceremony, the exact location to be chosen by the Town Manager, using the services of Town staff. I do not as yet have a cost estimate for creation of the plaque, but of course that will be an important part of the eventual application.

As I expect you know, Colonel Faulkner's life accomplishments were originally memorialized by a donation of room furnishings for, and a tablet mounted in, the Northwest Room of the original Acton High School building in 1926. Regrettably that tablet, and all the other memorials in the building, were apparently ripped out when the High School building was converted to the Towne Elementary School in the 1970s and either discarded or simply lost.

I know of no one who has served the Town of Acton longer in a critical role than Francis Faulkner. His long span in the offices of Selectman and Town Clerk encompassed the later colonial period, the Revolutionary War, the era of the Article of Confederation and finally the creation of the United States of America. Colonel Faulkner was an outstanding civic leader and his memory should be better preserved than it has been. Without in any way intending to reduce the place that the 19 April 1775 life sacrifices of Captain Isaac Davis, Abner Hosmer and James Hayward have in Acton history, Colonel Faulkner not only contributed military service over an extended period, but also labored with distinction for many years at moulding the early Acton and offers a role model that should be better known.

FRANCIS FAULKNER (1728 – 1805)
Woodlawn Cemetery Section C, Lot # 233



Tombstone says: "Erected in Memory of Francis Faulkner, Esq. who after a long life of piaty and publick usefulness in Church and State died August 5, 1806, Age 77"

[Note the 1806 date is thought to be in error, his death is otherwise recorded as occurring in 1805.]

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Proposed Memorial Plaque - 1st Draft (all lines centered)

1728 FRANCIS FAULKNER 1805

ACTON SELECTMAN & TOWN CLERK 1762 - 1796

"Upright in Character, Wise in Counsel, Faithful in Service"

Acton Leader Throughout Period of Transition from Colony to United States of America

Member of Provincial Congress 1774

Revolutionary War Service as Colonel of Middlesex Regiment:

Engaged with British Troops on Battle Road April 19, 1775

Dorchester Heights 1775, White Plains 1776, Saratoga 1777

Delegate to State Constitutional Convention 1779

Representative to Great and General Court 1783-1785

Early Cloth Mill Owner and Operator

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A short biography of Francis Faulkner written by Margaret McEuen and copied from an Internet article filed in the Acton Memorial Library, and an extract of some material from Phalen's History of the Town of Acton

relevant to Francis Faulkner, are attached to this email and provide additional details.

Regards,
Dore' Hunter
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7/9/2004

Col. Francis Faulkner
1728-1806



Epitaph:

Erected in Memory of Francis Faulkner, Esq.
who after a long life of piety and publick usefulness in Church and State
died Aug. 5, 1800

by Margaret McEuen

Col. Francis Faulkner, Esq. was born on 29 Sep 1728 in Andover, Essex Co., MA. He was the oldest son of Ammi Ruhammah Faulkner and Hannah Ingalls. He had two sisters, Hannah, who was the oldest child, and Abigail, who were younger, as well as three younger brothers, James, Ammi, and Nathaniel. His father, Ammi Ruhammah, was the child that Francis' grandmother, Abigail Dane Faulkner, was carrying when she was convicted of being a witch in the Salem Witch Trials of 1692. She was spared being hanged until her child was born, as the Puritans would not kill an unborn child. That child, Ammi Ruhammah, was born in March 1693 and by that time the hysteria had passed and Abigail was spared. She named him Ammi Ruhammah which means, "My people have obtained mercy". He had saved his mother's life.

Francis' grandfather was Francis Faulkner of Andover and his great grandfather was Edmund Faulkner, one of the original settlers of Andover, MA,

Ammi Ruhammah moved to Littleton, MA by 1732 and then on to Acton by 1738 where he ran the Mills in South Acton and soon bought both the Mills and the Faulkner House the latter of which remained in the family until 1940.

Francis was a Clothier, according to the land records, and like his father also ran the Mills in South Acton. He received the west side of the Faulkner House at High and Main St. in South Acton when his father died in 1756. His mother, Hannah, received the east side of the house until her death in 1781. Then he shared the house with his brother, Ammi, who received the east side when their mother died. He already owned one half of the Mills and purchased the other half from his mother and his siblings: Hannah, wife of Thomas White, James, Nathaniel, Abigail, and Nathaniel, who all quit-claimed their rights to their shares for 20 Lbs. each, in Oct of 1756. [Middlesex Co. Land Records]

He held the office of Town Clerk between 1762 and 1797 in Acton. He was conscientious in his duties as shown by the exacting care with which he kept the records and also by the extras he put in - such as copying the entire Declaration of Independence into the town record book, so it would be preserved and available to all Actonians.

He served in the military between 1772 and 1774 from Acton and held the office of Rep. to the Provincial Congress in 1774. His active support in the Revolutionary cause began in 1772, when, at a special town meeting held 21 Dec., he was chosen to Acton's committee to draft a reply to correspondence from Boston over measures of the British Administration - "Taxation without representation" and Townsend duties.

He assisted in drawing up Acton's resolves over the destruction of the tea in the Boston Tea Party. He was also a member of the Committee of Safety, and of several important conventions, held during the Revolution. Previous to the outbreak of the Revolution, Francis was Captain of Acton's West Militia Co., his commission coming from King George III. Increasingly, it is said, he found this post difficult to carry, because of the king's acts of oppression against the colonies. Finally, in April of 1775 he renounced his king's commission, leaving the captaincy of the West Co. vacant and the command was filled temporarily by 1st Lt. Simon Hunt.

He served in the Battle of Lexington and Concord on 19 Apr 1775. The most exciting events as they affected the Faulkner House and its occupants were those in the dark hours before dawn on the 19th of Apr. 1775, when the entire Faulkner family was awakened from their sleep to the clatter of a horse's hooves coming across the bridge at the milldam. This rider, unknown to the Faulkners, but now believed to have been Dr. Samuel Prescott, who escaped the guard that captured Paul Revere, shouted up the alarm that the British Regulars were marching to Concord and then dashed off towards Stow. As fast as he could, and without even stopping to dress, Francis fired his pistol three times out of one of his bedroom windows - the signal that his militia company should muster in his front yard. When the company assembled, bringing their wives and children with them, Faulkner put Lt. Simon Hunt in charge and left to take command as Colonel of the Middlesex Regiment. Isaac Davis' Acton Minuteman Co. had left earlier, and Faulkner's Co. arrived at the Concord fight in time to see the British fire and Capt. Davis and Abner Hosmer fall. Once the Company had left the Faulkner house, the women and children began to prepare the soldier's dinners. After much ado over how this should be done - each woman wanting to prepare her own husband's - it was finally decided to cook and pack all together and let the men divide it as they wanted. Stakes were driven down in the yard of the house, fires were built and the kettles hung to cook the meal. One of these kettles is now preserved in the Acton Memorial Library, given by the Faulkner heirs. The dinner was cooked and packed and a group of boys, led by Francis Faulkner, Jr., carried it down to find the Acton Militia. They had several frights at seeing dead men by the road and thinking it was Col. Faulkner, but finally found their men in Lexington; Faulkner organizing his regiment and his men in high spirits at having driven the British back from Concord - and at all events "glad of their dinner". It was these boys, led by Francis Faulkner Jr., who brought back to Acton that afternoon the tragic news that Capt. Davis had been killed in the Concord fight, as had Deacon Hosmer's youngest son, the pride of his old age. [Nylander's Iron Works Farm booklet]

He again served between 1776 and 1778 in the Revolutionary War. When the Mass. militia was reorganized in Feb. of 1776, Francis Faulkner was commissioned Lt. Col. of the Third Middlesex Regiment and in that capacity (and in a handsome new uniform, his son admiringly recalled) aided Gen. Washington at Dorchester Heights, previous to the Evacuation of Boston. In Sep. 1776 Col. Faulkner and his Acton Co. were at White Plains, and tradition says his men behaved bravely despite their loss of one man and the general loss of the battle. At Saratoga, in 1777, Col. Faulkner and the Acton and Concord men went on a scouting party on Oct. 14th, returning on the 16th just in time to have "the pleasure to see the whole of Burgoyne's army 'parade their arms' and march out of our lines." Faulkner's Acton men helped guard the prisoners back to Cambridge. [Shattuck's History of Concord]

He was elected as Deacon in the Old Congregational Church in Acton between 29 Sep 1775 and 5 Aug 1805, his death date.

He held the office of Justice of the Peace in 1781 in Acton. The old garrison room at the SW corner of the Faulkner house, which is a huge room that had been built to accommodate 100 people in the event of an Indian attack, became Acton's courthouse, where local justice was dispensed. He also held the office of Rep. to the General Court between 1783 and 1785.

He died on 5 Aug 1805 in Acton. He was honored and lamented when he died. In the History of Acton, it is said: "In all places he exhibited the character of a gentleman of sound judgment, of cultivated mind, and of good, practical common sense. He was a courageous military officer, and able legislator, and impartial justice, and exemplary Christian". There was also an article in The Columbian Centennial of 14 Aug 1805 that tells of his "active and useful life". [Col. Francis Faulkner and the Battle of Lexington]

He was buried about 7 Aug 1805 in Woodlawn Cemetery in Acton. He is buried in lot #233 in Section C. The cemetery records say he died in 1806, but the newspaper records say he died in 1805.

He was first married to Elizabeth Muzzy (daughter of John Muzzy and Mary (---) Muzzy) on 29 Apr 1756 in Lexington, Middlesex Co., MA. Elizabeth only lived a short while after they married according to most accounts. There was an Ammi Faulkner who lived in Royalton and who may have been born on 7 June 1756, according to some sources, which the same day as Elizabeth's death date. The records are not clear and more research needs to be done. Some accounts, including one by his grandson, Rev. Cyrus Hamlin, say that Francis Faulkner had eleven children, but he had only ten by his second wife that have been found in the records. Ammi may have been his son by his first marriage and be the eleventh.

He named no other son after his father, and often the first son was so named. Since this Ammi was born shortly after his parent's marriage date, his birth may not have been recorded in the official vital records, IF he was their son. It has not been verified that this Ammi Faulkner was a child of Elizabeth Muzzy and Francis Faulkner, as no records have been found for him though it is a possibility that he was born in the first marriage, as the dates are so close. Elizabeth Muzzy was born on 17 Dec 1734 in Lexington, Middlesex Co., MA and was christened there on 22 Dec 1734. She died on 7 Jun 1756 in Acton, and was buried about 8 Jun 1756 in Woodlawn Cemetery.

He was married the second time to Rebecca Keyes (daughter of Capt. Solomon Keyes and Sarah Danforth) on 24 Feb 1759 in Warren, Worcester Co., MA. They may have been married in Acton instead. Rebecca Keyes was born on 16 Feb 1735/36 in Warren, Worcester Co., MA. She died on 3 Apr 1812 in Acton.

Selected facts from Harold R. Phalen's History of the Town of Acton (1954):

FRANCIS FAULKNER (1728-1805)

Acton's Longest Serving SELECTMAN

1760 to 1796

also

Town Clerk

1760 to 1796

Second generation resident of the Faulkner House

Signed, as Town Clerk, Acton's March 5th 1770 Town Meeting Resolution to not further import English goods but endeavor to promote local manufacture.

Appointed by Town Meeting, convened on December 21, 1772 to hear a letter from Town of Boston concerning British violation of rights and privileges as a member of the committee to draft a response.

Appointed by a Special Town Meeting, convened on January 17, 1774 to receive papers from the Town of Boston related to the "Boston Tea Party" of December 17, 1773 and prepare draft resolves and report at the Annual Town Meeting held March 7th 1774, said reply being voted unanimously.

A delegate to the August 30-31, 1774 county convention at Concord pertaining to the perceived unjust late Acts of Parliament and the rights of the colonists.

Chosen at a Special Town Meeting held on October 3, 1774 as a delegate to a provincial congress to be held in Concord on October 11th of that year.

Selected on January 4, 1775 as a member of a committee to see that the resolves of the Continental Congress were strictly observed.

He received word early on April 19, 1775 from a rider that the British were marching on Lexington and Concord at the Faulkner House and fired a three shot alarm which was repeated into the distance. While Captain Davis' Company of Minutemen gathered at the Davis homestead the members of the West Militia Company and their families gathered at the Faulkner House. Captain Simon Hunt took command of the company in order that Colonel Faulkner could perform the duties that would occupy him upon his arrival at Concord.

In February 1776 a new organization of militia was formed and Concord, Lexington, Weston, Acton and Lincoln were assigned to the Third Regiment, Eleazer Brooks as Colonel, Francis Faulkner, Lieutenant Colonel.

Francis Faulkner was present at the surrender of British General Burgoyne in September 1777.

Appointed to a committee on October 24, 1776 to draft resolutions, unanimously accepted, seeking a convention for the adoption of a state constitution.

As Town Clerk copied into the town records (Volume 1, Page 283) the full text of the Declaration of Independence.

When Harold R. Phalen wrote his "History of the Town of Acton", specifically while commenting on Luther Conant's 1902 retirement from his position as Town Moderator, he stated: "With the cessation of his activities as moderator Mr. Conant became one of the small coterie of men beginning with Jonathan Billings and Francis Faulkner who spent the major portion of a long life in one town office while functioning without stint in numerous other capacities."

Unfortunately the only Acton memorial to Francis Faulkner, other than his Woodlawn Cemetery tombstone, has been lost. A tablet honoring him, and his grandson, was donated by Francis' great granddaughter, Lady Sophia Faulkner Campbell, and placed in the 1925 High School's (Old Towne School) Northwest Room when it opened. However, when that building was converted to an Acton elementary school in the 1970s that tablet, and all the other historical markers, were stripped out of the building and lost.

According to Phalen the lost tablet contained the following text:

This Room is Furnished In Memory of

1728 **COLONEL FRANCIS FAULKNER** 1805

Upright In Character, Wise In Counsel, Faithful in Service
Member Of Provincial Congress 1774, Colonel of Middlesex Regiment 1775
Delegate To Constitutional Convention 1779
Representative To The General Court 1783-1785

As Chairman Of The Committee Of Safety His Signal Gun Was Fired Three Times Before Daybreak April 19, 1775, Which Signal Was Repeated From Every Farm House The Sounds Growing Fainter In The Distance. The Acton Minute-Men Assembled At The Faulkner And Davis Homesteads, Then Marched With Captain Davis To Concord Bridge.

In Peace He Was A Leading Citizen In All Public Interests. He Developed At The Faulkner Mills, South Acton. One Of The Earliest Cloth Mills Of This Country. The Wool, After Carding, Was Distributed To The Homes For Spinning And Weaving, Then Returned To The Mill For Fulling, Dyeing, And Dressing. Prizes Were Awarded For The Finest Specimens In Home Made Broadcloth.

And His Grandson

1805 **COLONEL WINTHROP E. FAULKNER** 1880

Member Of The State Senate 1853-1854
Director Of The Fitchburg Railroad 1855-1872
Genial, Hospitable, Public-Spirited, A Leader In The Military,
Musical, Social, And Civic Activities Of Acton

Given By His Daughter In 1926
SOPHIA FAULKNER CAMPBELL

Col. Francis Faulkner
1728-1806



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Erected in Memory of Francis Faulkner, Esq.
who after a long life of piety and publick usefulness in Church and State
died Aug. 5, 1800

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